

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 SY-05 OPR-02  
PC-01 /094 W

-----072276 101430Z /53

P R 101205Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7172  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 2213

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, GY  
SUBJECT: CARROT AND STICK APPROACH TO MOUSE USED BY PM ON  
REFERENDUM

1. AS JULY 10 REFERENDUM APPROACHED, THE COMRADE LEADER  
OF THE RULING PEOPLES NATIONAL CONGRESS, PRIME MINISTER  
FORBES BURNHAM, HAS STEPPED UP BOTH THREATS AND PROMISES TO  
THE OPPOSITION MOUSE. (THE REFERENDUM SYMBOLS CHOSEN BY THE  
GOVERNMENT ARE A HOUSE FOR AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE AND A MOUSE  
FOR A NEGATIVE VOTE.)

2. SPEAKING IN BERBICE ON JULY 7, BURNHAM ACCUSED THE  
OPPOSITION OF FOMENTING VIOLENCE AND WARNED THAT SECURITY  
FORCES WOULD TAKE FIRM ACTION IF SUCH A SITUATION ARISES,  
ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED "GUYANA CHRONICLE" OF  
JULY 8. IN WHAT THE CHRONICLE DESCRIBES AS "AN EMOTIONAL  
OUTBURST", BURNHAM IS QUOTED AS DECLARING: "COME HELL OR  
HIGH WATER, THE NEW CONSTITUTION MUST COME." (GOVERNMENT  
CONTROLLED PRESS AND RADIO HAVE SHARPLY CRITICIZED MOSCOW-  
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ORIENTED OPPOSITION PEOPLES' PROGRESSIVE PARTY LEADER CHEDDI  
JAGAN FOR ADVOCATING VIOLENCE ALONG RACIAL LINES DURING  
RECENT SPEAKING EXCURSIONS OUTSIDE OF THE CAPITAL,  
ALLEGATIONS WHICH JAGAN HAS DENIED IN THE PPP "MIRROR".

3. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT HAS OFFERED CONSIDERABLE  
CONCESSIONS TO POPULATION ELEMENTS WHICH MIGHT HAVE A

POTENTIAL FOR DISRUPTION. THE SUGAR WORKERS WERE PROMISED THAT PARTICIPATION IN LAST FALL'S LONG STRIKE WOULD NOT PRECLUDE THEM FROM OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT IN OTHER ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRY NOW THAT THE HARVEST NEARS COMPLETION; THE BAUXITE WORKERS AT LINDEN, ALWAYS A POTENTIALLY VOLATILE GROUP, WERE PROMISED ON JULY 6 THAT THEY WOULD BE AWARDED THE EQUIVALENT OF TWO WEEKS SALARY TAX FREE ON JULY 21 AS THEIR PART OF THE 1977 PROFITS OF THE COMPANY; CONSUMER GOODS REMAIN MORE AVAILABLE THAN THEY WERE IN THE RECENT PAST, ETC.

4. BUT UNDER A VENEER OF CALM, THERE IS TENSENESS. DESPITE THE ASSURANCE OF TWO WEEKS PAY, SOME BAUXITE WORKERS LED BY THE WORKING PEOPLES ALLIANCE WENT OUT ON STRIKE ON JULY 7 TO EXPRESS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PAY SETTLEMENT, CLAIMING THAT THERE STILL REMAINED UN-ANSWERED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE SHARING OF THE 1977 BAUXITE PROFITS. BY JULY 8 THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED RADIO ADMITTED THAT AT LEAST 2,500 WORKERS HAD STAYED OFF THE JOB. THE GOVERNMENT ALLEGES THAT THIS STOPPAGE AND MEETINGS HELD BY THE WPA IN GEORGETOWN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE QUESTION IS POLITICAL, NOT ECONOMIC, AND THUS FULFILLS THE GOVERNMENT'S PREDICTIONS OF STRIKES BEFORE THE JULY 10 REFERENDUM. ALSO ON JULY 7, GEORGETOWN CITY BUSDRIVERS WALKED OUT IN PROTEST OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ONE OF THEIR NUMBER BY THE COMPANY. THE MEDIA HAS

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NOT YET, HOWEVER, PORTRAYED THE BUSDRIVERS' "WALK-OFF" AS POLITICAL.

5. THERE ARE SOME SIGNS OF EXTRA SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AROUND GEORGETOWN SUCH AS THE REPLACEMENT OF POLICE SECURITY OFFICERS AROUND SOME OFFICIALS' RESIDENCES BY GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE (GDF) PERSONNEL. ADDITIONAL GDF FORCES HAVE BEEN MOVED INTO GEORGETOWN, AND THE GDF IS ON ALERT. BUT WHILE THE CITY ON JULY 7 REMAINED OUTWARDLY NORMAL, BOTH THOSE WHO FAVOR PASSAGE OF THE REFERENDUM AND THOSE WHO ADVOCATE ITS BOYCOTT WHILE CYNICALLY FORECASTING ITS PASSAGE BY A LARGE MAJORITY WILL BE GRATEFUL IF THE REFERENDUM AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS RESULTS ARE ACCOMPLISHED PEACEFULLY.

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## Message Attributes

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